FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO : Department of State 755.00/12-2950

FROM : BRUSSELS 729 Dedember 29, 1950

REF : Embtel 1032 December 22; Embassy despatch 717, Dec. 21,1950

SUBJECT :

ACTION EUR

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It is pleasing to report that, following my conversation with leaders of the Belgian Liberal Party on December 21 as reported in the reference telegram, although the Liberal Deputies in the Lower House of Parliament abstained in the vote on the government bill fixing the maximum army contingent for next year at 150,000 men, the Liberal Senators on the following day voted in favor of the bill. In fact the former President of the Senate, Mr. Robert Gillon explained the position of his party by saying:

"The Liberal group will vote for the military contingent law. It is inspired above everything with the higher interests of the nation".

Contrary to the statement made in my telegram under reference the Socialist Deputies in the Lower House did not abstain in the vote on the military contingent bill but voted against it. The Socialists also ranged themselves with the Communists in the Senate in voting against the bill.

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We are continuing our efforts by intensive personal persuasion to bring the Belgian Socialists to see the danger of the position which they have adopted. We believe that the Socialists are amenable to persuasion. They point out that their negative vote on the military contingent bill was in the form of a protest against the government's manner of presenting the bill. The Socialists claim that the Government asked them in effect to sign a blank check fixing the military contingent at a very high figure prior to any detailed statement justifying that figure. The Department will recall that the Socialists in particular are opposed to the Government's insistence on 24 months' service. Had this issue first been debated and resolved, it seems probable that the Socialists would not have taken the negative position they adopted on the military contingent bill, and that at a minimum they might have abstained.

During his...

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY J.L. Smith DATE NOV 2 2 1982

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JAN 24 1951 FILED

As indicated in Embassy telegram 1080 of Dec. 29, Paul-Henri Spaak, the former Socialist Prime Minister, will probably dine with the Secretary on January 14. Since Spaak will be writing a series of articles for publication in Europe, this, to our mind, presents an unique opportunity for him to be brought to a clear realization of where the interests of European Socialists actually lie at this critical juncture of international affairs. Not only will the Secretary be able to point out the need for Socialists in Belgium to vote for an adequate defense program but also, he will be able, we trust, to enlist Spaak's support for convincing the Socialists in other countries of the necessity for resolute, immediate and intelligent action.

Robert Murphy

ROBERT MURPHY